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MEMOIRS

OF

Mr. RICHARD MORRIS.

BY

REV. B. GODWIN.

SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

Price 2s. 6d. boards.

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W. T. Fry Sc.

REV.D RICH.D MORRIS.

Late of

Amersham Bucks.

Memoirs

OF

RICHARD MORRIS,

LATE

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH,

AMERSHAM,

Bucks.

COMPILED BY

B. GODWIN,

Great Missenden.

BIBLIOTHECA SEP 1882 GODLEIANA

SECOND EDITION REVISED.

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PREFACE.

IF any apology be deemed necessary for obtruding this little work on public notice, the only one the Compiler has to offer is simply this:—It had long been the wish of many who knew Mr. Morris to possess an account of his early life; their requests, however, were unavailing till he was nearly in a dying state, when he dictated at intervals, and a friend wrote. It would have been very inconvenient to have so many copies as were needed written. At the joint request, therefore, of Mr. Morris and his friends, the writer of this undertook to prepare it for the press, after it had been declined by one who knew and respected Mr. M. but whose time and talents were almost incessantly occupied by an institution which is the glory of our land. It was thought proper to continue the Memoirs to Mr. M's. death; and by the desire of many the Appendix is added.

With regard to the plan, the compiler conceived that some advantages might attend throwing the Memoirs into the form of letters, as it afforded suitable pauses to the Narrative, and gave opportunity for some reflections which may be of service to the younger part of his readers; besides, as the writer is not accustomed to appear in this capacity before the public, he felt himself more at home in the epistolary style.

As the work in not of a nature to make any pretensions to literary excellence, and scarcely a proper subject of criticism, he does not feel much alarmed at venturing it into the world; especially as he has no expectations that it will extend much beyond the circle of Mr. Morris's acquaintances, for whose sake principally is was drawn up; and he is confident that, whatever be its deficiencies, it will be favourably received by them.

It may be proper to remark, that the circumstance alluded to in the first letter is not feigned.

TO THE

CHURCH *AND* CONGREGATION

AT AMERSHAM,

LATE

UNDER THE PASTORAL CARE

OF

RICHARD MORRIS,

These Memoirs

ARE,

With Affection and Respect,

INSCRIBED BY

THE COMPILER.

Great Missenden, Bucks.

MEMOIRS

OF

RICHARD MORRIS.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

HOW often are we reminded, by the fluctuation and uncertainty of human events, of the advice of Solomon: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might!" Through inattention to this, we expose ourselves to numberless disappointments; and many good purposes are never realized, because we defer the execution of them to a more convenient season.

Our first interview with Mr. Morris, now more than two years since, excited in us both a strong desire to be more fully acquainted with the interesting particulars of his life. A determination was then formed to embrace the earliest opportunity of spending some time together with him, to hear from his own lips an account of all the way which the Lord had led him. That time never arrived,--nor will it ever arrive, till we hold converse in a better world. He has left the

scenes of earth for ever. His dwelling is, "the house appointed for all living;" and his spirit has returned "to God who gave it."

In my intercourse with Mr. Morris, I often heard detached parts of his life and experience, which made me join in the regret of many of his friends, that their solicitations, though frequently repeated, and earnestly pressed, could never prevail on him to commit to writing some memoirs of his life. I saw the man of God laden with years, and sinking under the pressure of infirmities, approach the verge of Jordan, and was then compelled, not without some painful reflection, to relinquish all hope of putting our long-deferred plan into execution. But when laid aside from public labours, and preparing to enter into rest, the hope of being in some measure useful to those whom he was about to leave, induced him to comply with the wishes of his friends; and he dictated at intervals, as his strength admitted, a brief history of himself. This I shall now transmit to you, as the only means of compensating for the opportunity we lost.

It was truly affecting to see him, when the indications of approaching dissolution were visible in his countenance, and his anticipations of heavenly rest were strong, and near the point of being realized, taking a last— a parting view of the road through which he had travelled; tracing the merciful interpositions of a kind and gracious Providence, in order to leave in the hands of his beloved friends, whom he could serve no longer, a memorial of Divine goodness

and faithfulness, which might encourage them to be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." The following is nearly verbatim what he dictated.

"I was born in the parish of Radcliffe, in Lancashire, May 29th, 1747. My father, George Morris, was a respectable farmer. I was brought up to attend with my parents the Presbyterian meeting at Cockey Moor, of which Dr. Barnes, who afterwards removed to Manchester, was then minister.

"There was nothing remarkable in my early life, except that, being the youngest child, and at a distance from any school, my education was, for several years, neglected. My father was very earnest in enforcing my attendance on public worship; but I frequently found myself more disposed to hearken to the wicked advice of those around me, and to follow the inclinations of a heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." But it was my mercy that I could not sin without control; for at this time I had strong convictions respecting Death—Eternity—and Judgment to come—which obliged me to conclude that at some future time I would amend my life; and this was all I then knew about religion. But I found that, instead of an alteration for the better, my heart and my ways became more and more depraved. Convictions still continuing to follow me, I felt the most awful enmity against that authority, which threatened me with a dreadful day of account.

"When I was sixteen years old I was much dis-

tressed at the loss of a sister, who died at the age of twenty. This brought home to my conscience the convictions I had before, with redoubled force. And now I resolved again to set out in religion with greater earnestness; but I was at this time unacquainted with the disease of sin, and the remedy which God has provided in the Gospel; so that I found the resolutions which I made melt away before the force of temptation. I therefore began to despair of the reformation which I had so often determined on, and quieted my conscience by concluding that as I saw the world in general inattentive to these things, I would not be singularly wicked, nor particularly distress myself on the subject of religion."

Such, my dear friend, was the commencement of Mr. Morris's life; how different from its close! Though the glory of God shone on his departing hours, the morning of his days was beclouded with sin and folly. Like the rest of the fallen children of Adam, he was "shapen in iniquity," and went "astray from the womb." Hence the necessity of a complete change, not merely of the conduct but of the heart. "Ye must be born again." The nature and progress of that change will, in a very marked manner, be developed by the succeeding parts of our departed friend's history.

The benefit of religious instruction is here very apparent, from the checks which it puts on the sinful propensities of the youthful mind. He could not sin comfortably on account of the convictions which he

felt, or else, in all probability, he would have sinned more. Parents cannot atone for their children's crimes, but they may do much to prevent them. If they cannot give their children grace, they can use those means in which grace is frequently communicated. "Train up a child in the way he should go."

What can shew in a stronger light the extreme depravity of the human heart, than its resistance to those very means which have a tendency to awaken, alarm, and excite the sinner to "flee from the wrath to come?" What Mr. Morris says of his feelings at this time is an illustration of the scripture—"The carnal mind is enmity against God." If grace were not more powerful to conquer than sin to resist, he would ever have remained a slave to corruption.

The uneasiness produced by convictions which he could not stifle, compelled him to attempt a reformation; but he knew not whence his strength must be derived. Feeble are the efforts of unassisted nature to emancipate a soul from the bondage of sin. Foiled in his attempts, he gives up the hope of conquest, and endeavours to pacify his conscience by becoming as good as the generality of the world,—a world which, the scripture saith, "lieth in wickedness." But he was not to rest here: God had determined otherwise. "My thoughts are not as your thoughts, saith the Lord." This my next will fully exemplify. In the mean time be assured that

I remain, &c.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT does not appear that any thing particular occurred in the life of Mr. Morris, from the period with which my last closed, to the twentieth year of his age, with which this commences.

"About the year 1767 I was invited to visit a friend at West Chester; from which place I went with him through North Wales, and returned through Liverpool to my relatives at Radcliffe. From this time I began to be very unsettled: partly on account of a supposition that my father intended to give up the farm to a brother-in-law, and also by a strong desire to travel, which had possessed my mind ever since my journey through North Wales. But knowing that I could not support the expense that must attend travelling, I came to a determination to enter into the army, that I might have an opportunity of gratifying my inclination for seeing more of the world. I soon met with an acquaintance of mine, who was disposed the same way, and we adopted the resolution of entering into the Oxford Blues. Accordingly we both enlisted at Manchester in the year 1769, and joined the regiment at Stamford in Lincolnshire.

"Instead of experiencing the pleasure I had anticipated, I soon found that a life of riot and dissipation was not calculated to make me happy, even in

the present state. I therefore again determined to amend my life, but failed of my purpose; for I soon fell into the snare of intoxication, as I had done before. I was at this time quartered at the head inn in Stamford.

"One evening, as I was standing in the gate-way, opposite St. Mary's church, I saw a funeral pass, and followed it into the church. While attending the ceremonies of the interment, my mind was much impressed with the thoughts of Death—Eternity—and Judgment to come: and as we were standing around the grave, which was in the church, six trumpets sounded together to set the evening watch; the blast of which reverberating through the hollow dome of the church, seemed to strike the whole of the spectators with awe. My mind was deeply affected with the thought, that I must certainly hear the tremendous sound of the 'trump of God,' which would summon me and the whole world to appear before his bar.

"With these impressions I went into my room, and endeavoured to lift up my heart to that God who I knew must be my Judge, and came again to the determination that I would leave off drunkenness. This I had often resolved to do before; but having again fallen into the same snare, and that repeatedly, I was convinced that in order to attain my object I must *watch* as well as *pray*. I then resolved to drink nothing stronger than small beer, for twelve months, with any person on any account whatever. This re-

solution the Lord enabled me to keep, while living in the midst of snares and temptations. Though I was at this time, totally unacquainted with the nature of salvation by Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel, or with the agency of the Holy Spirit, to bring me into a personal acquaintance with it, yet, as I acted up to the light I then had, God, who has said in his word that we shall know 'if we follow on to know the Lord,' gradually revealed his mind and will to me through the influence of his Spirit. My mind has often been filled with gratitude and thankfulness in reflecting on the gracious dealings of God with me at that time; for I well know, although the path was dark and intricate to me, it was the way in which he thought best in mercy to lead me.

"From this time I was marked out by my comrades and officers as being deluded by methodistical notions. Some of them derided and persecuted, while others pitied me. One of them, in particular, expressed his compassion for me, that I should forego the pleasures of sense and the enjoyments of this world to no purpose, since I could have no superiority or advantage in the world to come, where every soldier would fill a station suitable to the rank he held on earth.

"Our next quarters were at Loughborough in Leicestershire, in 1770. Here I attended an evening lecture in Mr. Wesley's connection, where the first subject that particularly arrested my attention was from these words: Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for wide

is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' Matt. vii. 13, 14. These words I heard as a message from God to my soul; and, they being a part of the Saviour's sermon on the mount, I determined to read the whole carefully, and to pray that I might understand its contents, and reduce them to practice. By these means I found that humility and poverty of spirit, are essential features of a disciple of Christ, that we are cautioned against being actuated by the self-righteous, hypocritical spirit of the scribes and pharisees, who did every thing to be seen of men; but, notwithstanding, I considered that *fasting* and *prayer* were both enjoined by the Redeemer, and were consequently the duty of all who would become his disciples. But I found considerable difficulty in determining when these things should be attended to, particularly fasting. Here, a word of Christian advice would have been very serviceable to me; but I had no one to whom I could apply for instruction. But in one point I was quite clear, as to the privacy which should attend these duties, according to the precept, 'let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth.' Considering, therefore, that as fasting was the duty of Christians, it must be binding on me, I regularly fasted every Friday, and did not take even bread or water into my mouth from Thursday evening six o'clock till eight on Saturday morning. Although

I boarded in the house with the family where I was quartered, I thought proper not to let them know any thing of it, that I might not 'fast to be seen of men.' This practice I rigidly observed for nearly twelve months. If I went out in the morning, I always requested them not to wait for me at meals. I spent this time in reading, meditation, and prayer to God; and this part of my conduct was so far from their thoughts that I believe they never suspected the occasion of my absence.

"During this time I attended the General Baptist and Presbyterian meetings. I did not then know what denomination they were, but their discourses appeared to me very dry and doctrinal, and did not reach my case. I therefore determined to seek direction from God, by prayer and a diligent perusal of his holy word: and said, 'thou shalt guide me by thy counsel.'

"A clergyman in the church which I at this time attended was much in the habit of abusing the Methodists, as he called them, for believing in the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of regeneration: and hearing in the Dissenting meetings the depravity of human nature, and the necessity of renewing grace, the guilt of man, and salvation only by faith in Jesus Christ, together with the production of the 'fruits of the Spirit' in the life and conduct, constantly maintained, I became very anxious to know who were right, and what was the way in which God would have me to go. I then felt no

attachment to any denomination in particular. I was totally unacquainted with their respective peculiarities, and viewed them all with equal indifference; my sole concern was, to know and embrace the truth. But the reading and hearing of the word of God was so blessed to me, that light broke in upon my mind in a way that filled me with surprise. I wondered that I had so often read, to so little purpose, those parts of scripture which now afforded me so much consolation and delight; and I was still more surprised to find that men of education should censure and condemn as fanatics, those who believed in the influence of the Holy Spirit, while they constantly used those prayers which supplicate his grace on behalf of the king and royal family, clergy and people, and make constant reference to the influence of this divine agent as necessary to enlighten the mind, to sanctify and renew the soul, to comfort the heart, and to produce the fruits of righteousness.

"Being quite astonished at this contradiction, I could not help expressing my thoughts on the subject when I met with a person that I supposed had any knowledge of these things. One day, meeting with a young man from Scotland, belonging to the troop, who appeared to have some understanding in religious matters, I opened my mind to him, so far as to assert my suprise that so very few should attend to these important concerns. But after this man had heard my conversation on these subjects for some time, he turned what I said into ridicule, and adding

falsehood to it; he told the officers and men that I thought there was scarcely a Christian in the troop. This brought on me a great deal of persecution, for the men were let loose upon me by the officers, who encouraged them by saying, they hoped the men would remember me for putting out such speeches.

"At this time the commanding officer left Loughborough for a few days, and the men, according to a rule among themselves, tried me by what they called a Court Martial, for the alledged crime of scandalizing the regiment. I was then sentenced to be *cold burnt*, and accordingly was tied up in the yard, and a great many pails of water and ice thrown on me, till they were tired of fetching them from the horse-pond; and such was their determination to use me ill, that they placed sentinels around to keep off the people, that none might rescue me. On this occasion the people of the inn behaved very humanely towards me; they put me into a warm bed, sat up with me all night, and paid the greatest attention to me, so that I received no farther injury.

"This treatment I considered it my duty to bear with patience, as I remembered the words of Christ, 'if any man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.' Before my clothes were dry, one of the principal actors in this affair came to me to borrow money, which without hesitation I lent him, recollecting that we are directed to 'overcome evil with good.' Some of the men appeared ashamed of their conduct, while others boasted of it, and said 'I

should not have been half so good if they had not washed away my sins at Loughborough."

By what a strange train of occurrences are the most important events of our lives frequently connected! Who would have thought that Saul of Tarsus was so near his conversion to the Christian faith when he set out on his journey to Damascus? — or who would have supposed that when Mr. Morris left his paternal home to enter the army he would so soon have been brought to renounce allegiance to sin, and to take his stand on the Lord's side? While he was under the care of kind parents, who consulted his spiritual welfare, the instructions with which he was favoured took no apparent effect; but when in the midst of all the dissipation of a soldier's life, the power of divine grace wrought a change as unexpected as it was great.

It was not "the word preached" which first reached his conscience effectually, and led him in good earnest to sue for mercy, but a circumstance altogether accidental, as we should suppose, but without doubt under the superintendence of Divine Providence. By the powerful energy of him who has "the hearts of all men in his hands," the most trifling occurrences shall arrest the attention, give rise to reflections the most serious and alarming, and speak to the inmost soul with a tongue of eloquence which awakens an almost stupified conscience, and calls into exercise the strongest feelings of the mind. The wasting of a candle—the tolling of a bell—the striking of a

clock—the sounding of a trumpet— are common incidents, which in the minds of thousands may not in the least disturb their ordinary track of thought; while to another an incident of this kind may be the turning point of his eternal destiny, and the means of "saving his soul from death." Mysterious and powerful are the operations of that Divine agent who "quickens" the [illegible] are "dead in trespasses and sins." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

With a strong feeling of the worth of his soul, and a decided determination to seek salvation, how obscure, for a time, were our friend's perceptions of the gospel! This must have occasioned considerable bondage of mind; and hence he imposed on himself the severe task of fasting, for thirty-eight hours successively, every week. Happy are they who when thy begin to "hunger and thirst after righteousness," attend a ministry which leads them to the "bread of life," and "the waters of salvation;" who are surrounded with Christian friends who rejoice to shew to them "the way of God more perfectly!" Mr. M. does not here state any particular *manner* in which his mind was relieved from the terrors of conscience, or *time* when "peace with God" was first enjoyed. Too much stress has often been laid on the mere *circumstantials* of conversion. Many weak minds and tender consciences have been unnecessarily dis-

tressed because the time when convictions were first felt, and peace first enjoyed, and the immediate cause of these feelings, could not be ascertained. But if what is *essential* to this change exist, if "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," have been, and are exercised, it is of little consequence if we cannot ascertain *when* or *how* these were produced, since we know that they are the certain marks of salvation. The mind of Mr. M. seems gradually to have been opened to discover the glory of the gospel, and as gradually to have imbibed its consolations.

It is no wonder that the change which took place in his conduct, excited at once the surprise and opposition of his comrades. It has ever been the lot of real religion, whose Founder was called "a madman, and one that had a devil," to be contemned and persecuted. But its gentle spirit breathes the prayer—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The persecution which Mr. M. suffered, and the manner in which he bore it, copying him "who when he was reviled, reviled not again," afforded a proof, both of the sincerity and the heavenly nature of that religion, with which he now began to be experimentally acquainted. May we, my dear friend, drink more deeply into this lovely spirit of the Saviour, and have grace to exemplify all its holy effects!

I am, &c.

P.S. The case of Mr. Morris brings to my mind that of several others, who were made subjects of

divine grace in circumstances equally remarkable. I need not mention to you the conversion of the late venerable Newton. I know a person who now serves God in the gospel of his Son, and has been many years a minister of Jesus Christ, who after having long heard in vain the prayers of a pious parent, and the preaching of the gospel, left his native shores, and on the bosom of the deep, amidst the blasphemy of the profane, was brought as a wanderer back to God, and spent many hours unperceived in the long boat in "strong crying and tears." I have by me a letter, which breathes the true spirit of Christianity, written by a soldier in the Oxford Blues, whose first permanent religious impressions were received on a field of battle in Spain, and who afterwards fell on the sanguinary plains of Waterloo. "The Lord's arm is not shortened." Let us hope that in our army and navy many such instances occur.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AT any time and in any circumstances, it is pleasing to see the power and purity of real religion displayed amidst the surrounding vices of a world "alienated from the life of God." But here are some things which render its appearance

unusually interesting. A young man, scarcely twenty-four years of age,—in the army, a situation most unfavourable to any thing serious,—without a friend to be the guide of his youth,—seeking with an ardour which nothing could damp, the favour of God and the welfare of his soul;—enduring with calmness and constancy the frowns of his officers and the opposition of his fellow-soldiers, while he was in fact but a babe in grace." That part of his history which I now send you will shew, that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day."

"My next quarters (continues the narrative) were at Nottingham, in the year 1771. Here I had an opportunity of hearing a great variety of preachers, and among the rest Mr. Medley, on his journey from Watford to Liverpool, with whose sermons on the Lord's day I was much pleased and profited. One of his texts, I remember, was from 1 Kings xxii. 34: 'And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host, for I am wounded.' Many things which he said in his sermon were peculiarly important and useful to me; and particularly his observations on the desire of every convinced sinner to be kept from the noise and bustle of this sinful world, while speaking from the latter part of his text, 'carry me out of the host for I am wounded.'

"At Nottingham I found great difficulty in keeping to my determination of not uniting with any denomination of Christians till I saw my path clear from scripture; for each party wished me to adopt the whole of their opinions, which I could not do till I had a better opportunity of examining for myself. From Nottingham we removed to Hertfordshire, and the troop to which I belonged took up their quarters at Hemel Hempstead. Here I had an opportunity of hearing my valuable friend Mr. Jones, afterwards Dr. Jones of Hammersmith, whose ministry was made particularly useful to me, and whose behaviour to me was in every respect that of a father. Mr. Jones believing that God had designed me for the ministry, spared no pains to instruct me in what he thought would be useful to me in future life.

"About this time my officers were particularly enraged at me, because some more of the men attended with me at the meeting. While we staid at Hempstead, Captain Joss preached for Mr. Jones one sabbath afternoon; and to prevent our hearing him, our quarter-master gave orders for us to be with our horses at three o'clock, and to wait till he came; for he said he supposed all the troop would be running after the methodist devil. We were obliged to obey his orders, and I suffered a disappointment. This plan the quarter-master found so convenient to keep us away, that he resolved to continue it, and gave orders that we should be with our horses every Sunday afternoon. We then sent a petition to the War Office,

drawn up for us by Mr. Jones, addressed to Lord Barrington, containing a simple statement of our grievances, in being deprived of our privilege, as Protestant Dissenters, of attending a Dissenting meeting as often as we had opportunity; for we considered ourselves bound by the martial law to attend the Established Church in the morning. We received a very kind and polite answer to our petition, informing us, that though he could not interfere with the orders of the commanding officer, with respect to our being with our horses at a certain hour, yet we might have the privilege of attending the Meeting in the morning instead of the Established Church. Before the receipt of Lord Barrington's answer, I was removed to Hertford, where, on the Lord's day, I received a letter from Mr. Jones, with a copy of the letter from the War Office. I therefore acquainted our commanding officer that we had the privilege of attending a Dissenting meeting, which we intended in future to embrace. He said we *must* go to church according to the articles of war, and *should* go. I replied, that, as Protestant Dissenters, we enjoyed the benefit of the toleration act; and our becoming servants to his Majesty could not constitute us slaves. As soon as our parade was over on the sabbath morning, I stepped out of the ranks to go to the meeting, and two more of the men followed me, but two others of our friends found their hearts fail them. Immediately a file of men was ordered to take us into confinement, and to keep us separate. We

remained in this state till Wednesday evening, when we were sent for by the adjutant, who asked me whether I did not think myself guilty of mutiny. I wished to know on what ground so heavy a charge could be founded. He said we had broken the parade, and shewed contempt of orders. On which I observed, that I should be very sorry to do any thing contrary to good discipline, and wished to know when I might consider the parade to be dismissed. He replied, when the troops are marched to the place paraded for, which was the church. I then told him I did not mean to go to church, as that would be acting below our privileges. We were then dismissed, and ordered back to our quarters. I soon found that within a few days they had received a letter from the War Office; but they took the advantage of a little informality in it, to inflict on us the punishment or confinement. In answer to another letter, Lord Barrington told them, that if he should have occasion to write to them again on the same subject, the letter should be signed G. Rex. This had the desired effect, and we were informed, at the head of the parade, that we had liberty to attend any place of worship, except a Roman Catholic chapel.

"In the year 1773 we removed our quarters to High Wycombe. I here heard preaching among different denominations, and was requested to give a word of exhortation at an early meeting on a sabbath morning. This soon came to the ears of the officers and men, who considered it a very great disgrace to

the regiment. They determined therefore again to try me by one of their mock courts martial. I was accordingly brought to trial in a meadow called the Rye, near the turnpike, and was again sentenced to be cold burnt, and orders were given to forbid any one bringing me dry clothes. This was executed in the most severe manner; but one of my comrades broke through their orders, and brought me some dry clothes, for which he was threatened to have the like punishment inflicted on him the next day. The probability of this brought me, for the first time, to the fixed determination to oppose such illegal treatment. I waited on the commanding officer, and enquired if he knew the manner in which I had been treated by the men. He made no answer to my question, but advised me not to preach, observing that there were proper persons paid for preaching, and he thought it a pity that I should concern myself about religious instruction. I said, in reply, that it was a matter of conscience with me to warn sinners of their evil way; but that had not the men proceeded to the resolution of inflicting the same punishment on my companion, I might have let it pass over as I had done before; but that I was now determined, if the business was not put a stop to, I would immediately complain to General Conway, who, I had no doubt, would see the matter righted. After this, I had to suffer nothing more of this kind. Some unknown friend also put the proceedings of the Rye into the public papers, and enquired, if the permission of such

practices was consistent with the discipline of so respectable a regiment."

On the perusal of this letter, I have no doubt but you have remarked that independence of mind displaying itself, which ever afterwards formed so distinguishing a trait in the character of Mr. M. Amidst a variety of opinions which were presented to his attention, he ventured to think for himself. He attached a high degree of importance to religious principles, and was anxious to know the "truth as it is in Jesus;" but he proceeded with caution; he could not implicitly believe the sentiments of any; he must first become fully satisfied of their truth. I suppose that Mr. Morris had as little of a party spirit as can be imagined in the present state of human nature; he appeared to seek and to love truth for its own sake, and was determined to embrace it wherever he found it.

It is not surprising that, with a mind thus formed, endued with genuine piety, an ardent thirst for knowledge, and an earnest desire for the welfare of others, he should appear to an intelligent and zealous minister to be designed for a sphere of usefulness very different from that which he then occupied. To the kind attentions of Dr. Jones much of Mr. Morris's subsequent usefulness is to be attributed; from him, in all probability, he received his first impulse to engage in a work in which he afterwards laboured so successfully. Thus to appreciate real worth, and to take a young man of piety and talents by the hand,

to introduce him to public usefulness in the Saviour's cause, is no small honour.

The oppressive and arbitrary measures of the officers, respecting his attending that place of worship to which his conscience led him, gave an occasion for a noble stand for religious liberty. Indeed, Mr. Morris was a man eminently qualified for this; for, with an unbending firmness of mind, he possessed a calm and placed temper, which scarcely any thing could ruffle. Unintimidated by the frowns and threats of arbitrary power, he asserts his right, and finally enjoys those privileges which a more timid spirit would have lost. It is a peculiar blessing that we live under a government which, in so considerable a measure, guarantees the rights of conscience. Had our coustitution been favourable to despotic measures, or had those in authority turned a deaf ear to the voice of the oppressed, Mr. M. would probably have fallen a victim to the persecution which followed him. In their view he disgraces the regiment;—by what?—by drunkenness?—by blasphemy?—by a dissolute and abandoned life? No; these would not have called into exercise that hostility of the "carnal mind" which is enmity against God;" but by exhorting sinners to "flee from the wrath to come," and encouraging Christians to persevere in the good ways of God. I trust, my dear friend, that the rights of conscience are now better understood, and that a more liberal spirit prevails. In several cases, I have been informed, the superior officers of our army have afforded every

facility to the wishes of their men respecting divine worship; and this, without doubt, is a proceeding as politic as it is just.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE are now arrived at the twenty-seventh year of Mr. Morris's life, and find him, notwithstanding every difficulty, "flourishing like the palm tree," and "growing like the cedar in Lebanon;" occasionally speaking in public, and endeavouring to impress those truths on the minds of others which had been "the life of his spirit." From his line of life he could have "no continuing city;" he marches from place to place, uncertain what may befal him, except the most vexatious persecutions for the sake of the gospel.

"After remaining at Wycombe a short time, we removed to Amersham on the 5th of November, 1773. As I had left a circle of kind and respectable friends, I thought this the most uncomfortable and dreary place I had ever seen. I made up my mind, therefore, to petition the quarter-master to permit me to go with the party to Chesham, as I understood that there were more professors of religion there. He an-

swered, in a very jeering and ironical manner, that he had contrived better for me; for as my companions were gone to Chesham, he intended that I should remain here, for he understood this was a very dark place, and perhaps I might work a reformation among the people. By this, I had no doubt, he intended to mortify me, and to prevent my enjoying the company of pious persons at Chesham. Thus my own will was frustrated, to bring about the designs of God, in fixing this as the place of my future labours in the ministry; and thus I found it necessary to give up myself into his hands, who was, I knew, too wise to mistake, and too good to be unkind.

"The persecution and ill treatment which I suffered at Wycombe excited a great deal of interest among my religious friends; and through the intrumentality of Mr. Davis, who built and endowed the Episcopalian chapel at Loudwater, my case was spoken of to one of the six ejected ministers, who, being chaplain to Lord Robert Manners, recommended me to the notice of his Lordship and Lady Manners, and solicited their influence to procure my discharge.

"It may be proper to mention, that hitherto my connexions had been principally with the Evangelical clergy and the Wesleyan Methodists; and though I was in the habit of hearing the gospel wherever I thought it was scripturally preached, I constantly communed with the Church of England. Lord and

Lady Manners attended to the wishes expressed on my behalf; but notwithstanding all their exertions, and those of other friends, all hopes of obtaining my discharge appeared fruitless, at least for the present; on which Lady Manners sent me the following kind and feeling letter, breathing the true spirit of Christianity, which was very acceptable, and no less useful to my mind in those circumstances.

'RICHARD MORRIS,

'I have used every means to get your discharge, and am sorry to have to tell you it is, at present, impossible. I say I am sorry, because you are outwardly distressed; but you must look above men, and see it to be the Lord's will that you should serve him as a soldier. It is God and not man that keeps you in your present situation; for I trust you know that he has all hearts in his hands, and in his own good time may, perhaps, bring about what you so earnestly long for. He will over-rule all things for the good of his own dear children; and though we do not see it at present, yet hereafter we shall glorify him for many things which are now hard to be borne. But remember that his grace is sufficient for us, and that nothing is too difficult for the God we serve. We have infinite wisdom to direct what is best for our eternal interest, therefore be not discouraged. "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be free, use it rather; for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is

the Lord's free man." "Let patience have her perfect work." "Make your requests known unto God." But mind you ask in submission to the divine will; remember our Lord and Saviour himself, when praying, and in an agony desiring the bitter cup to pass from him, cried also, "Not my will but thine be done." Set God, incarnate for our sakes, before your eyes; see him enduring continual contradiction from sinners, before they were permitted to accomplish their bloody design; see him mocked, his power ridiculed, and the most blasphemous language used towards him! He has warned us of what we are to meet with if we follow him; but has, before-hand, graciously spoken a blessing on them that are hated, and separated, and reproached, their name even cast out as evil, for the Son of man's sake. See Luke vi. It is not the nature of flesh and blood to "pray for them that despitefully use us;" but it is the command of our Master, and with his command he gives power to obey. "His hand is not shortened." Endeavour to walk worthy of the calling you profess. Study your Bible, there you will find much consolation; take it as the rule of your conduct; and be particularly careful that you give no occasion of reproach on the name by which you are called. I know the provocations they will throw in your way; and nothing less than Almighty power can keep you from falling by some of them. Every fault is an advantage to the enemy, and a reproach on your Divine Master; you have therefore great need to watch over yourself.

It is impossible for you to stand a moment if you cease looking to the Lord Christ; but he being exalted on high, and having "received gifts for men," will give you grace and strength in every hour of need. I do not say these things from any mistrust of you, but to offer you some helps in your present situation. Remember, we profess to follow a despised Jesus, through a despising world. "Let us therefore go forth, bearing his reproach;" in all things careful that every evil they ascribe to us is "falsely and for his sake." Do not despair, or distrust God's care over you, on account of this disappointment; our enemies, nay, even Satan himself, can go no farther than he is permitted. God "does not afflict willingly the children of men;" and there is a "needs be" for every temptation. If it is for the trial of your faith, the exercise of a patient submission will work out for you "a far more exceeding weight of glory." Perhaps the Lord may design you the honour of bringing some of your companions to the knowledge and enjoyment of himself: if they will not bear speaking to, your conduct may strike them, and lead even them, to "glorify your Father which is in heaven." Be assured, whenever an opportunity offers, I will use the means for your liberty; but I repeat, don't depend on me, but on God, to make the means effectual; and do not say to any body that I will do so. If you can get a furlough at any time, come to me in town, or at Ealing, near Brentford, where I shall be in about ten days. You may let me know if you receive this. I

commend you to God, and to the power of his grace in Christ, for whose sake I am,

Yonr willing servant,

M. MANNERS.'

"During an interval of a few months, I had passed through Rutlandshire and part of Northamptonshire; and at the Baptist meeting at Kettering I saw seven persons baptized, which was the first opportunity I ever had of seeing adult baptism administered; nor had I even heard that there was a denomination of Christians by whom it was practised. The arguments made use of by the preacher, and the conclusions which were drawn, appeared to me to have great weight, and I came to the determination of searching the scriptures on this subject; which having done diligently, it established my conviction, that what I had heard and seen was agreeable to the baptism of the New Testament. This was in the year 1774."

What a singular coincidence appears here, between the ironical speech of the quarter-master and Mr. Morris's future station and labours! What was intended as a mortification by this arbitrary officer was, by leading him to seek connexions at Amersham, an important link in the chain of Divine Providence, on which much of his future happiness and usefulness depended. Thus can the God in whom we trust cause "the wrath of man to praise him;" and thus is his promise verified—"All things shall work together for good, to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose."

A beautiful contrast to the despotic behaviour of this *hater* "of good men" is here presented in the conduct of Lord and Lady Manners. To rescue even a private soldier, who was "perseeuted for righteousness' sake," from the power of oppression, to distinguish eminent piety by personal interference, was not considered beneath the dignity of noble blood. I don't know, my dear friend, whether it is from the scarcity of religion in the higher walks of life,—or from the great means of usefulness which such a station affords,—perhaps it is from both these together,—but I certainly do feel an unusual pleasure in beholding the combination of rank and piety. The coronet of nobility seems to shine with increased splendour when associated with religion. And I delight in the thought that there are some who surround the British throne, and legislate in the most august assembly in the world, who unite goodness to greatness, and fervent piety to true patriotism. I feel for them a respect almost unbounded, while I behold them, at the head of institutions which are the glory of our land, uniting their exertions with men of every class, and advocating the cause of Benevolence and Christianity. Though my situation precludes acquaintance on earth, I hope to rejoice in their society in heaven.

Lady Manners was eminently distinguished for her piety and virtue, and, influenced by her, his Lordship with condescending affability made every effort to serve Mr. Morris; but for the present the way

seemed blocked up. High as his expectations were raised by the interference of such illustrious friends, it was not the time which an all-wise Providence had designed for his liberation, though two men had been offered to serve in his stead. Next to the pleasure of realizing his hopes, must have been that of receiving such a letter, fraught with sound sense, kind sympathy, and genuine Christianity. Blessed religion! which, while it interferes not with our several stations in life, produces such a union of feeling, such a sympathy of affection, in the breasts of rich and poor, bond and free, prince and peasant. How admirably adapted to promote the happiness of society and the peace of the world! Let it but be universally prevalent, and men shall no longer sacrifice at the shrine of ambition and pride, nor march under their banner to slaughter and death; but this heavenly principle, restraining and subduing the baleful passions which engender strifes and wars, shall calm the tempests of society, draw closer the social bond, and render the sword and the spear useless, but—to be transformed into the "ploughshare and the pruning-hook." Thus "let the whole earth be filled with the Divine glory. Amen and Amen."

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE have often had occasion to remark that persecution, not unfrequently, by its violence defeats its own end, and subserves that cause which it meant to destroy. The envious and malignant efforts of Haman, instead of ruining Mordecai, only exalted him and added to his honours. Thus the great Governor of the Universe works, by ways and means which often nonplus our reason, and in a surprising manner controls events to fulfil his purposes of mercy to his children.

"Lady Manners (continues Mr. Morris) not being satisfied with the exertions which had been already made to procure my discharge, his Lordship came to me on Ashford Common, and desired me the first opportunity to come to see him in London. I therefore asked for a furlough, but received a denial. After this I received a note from his Lordship, desiring me to make the request in his name; to which I replied, that I had already done so, and was refused.

"In the beginning of the year 1775 I was with a detachment of the troops on duty at the Horse Guards; here I received an invitation from Lady Manners, to visit them at Grosvenor-square, the first opportunity which occurred. My duty at this time

was that of *orderly man* at St. James's Palace; and as there were two more in the same situation, we agreed among ourselves to wait successively. During one of these intervals from duty, I waited on Lord and Lady Manners; and returning from Grosvenor-square, I met the captain of my troop in the street, who immediately ordered a roll-call, with the pretence of ascertaining who was absent, though he had passed me within half an hour. On my return to the garrison, I was ordered into confinement by one of the officers; and the next day I was sent with a strong guard to head-quarters at Cranford Bridge. One of my friends in the regiment, understanding that they intended to punish me, advised me to write to some friend in London immediately. I wrote to Lord R. Manners, who came in his carriage the same evening, and desired the officer to place the whole of the blame to his account, as he had sent for me to Grosvenor-square; but the reply was, that they were determined to try me by a court martial. He then requested them to inform him when and where the court martial would be held, as he intended to be present.

"I was kept in confinement for twelve days after this, and heard not a word farther on the subject. Early in the morning of the thirteenth day, I received orders to proceed to the Bush Inn at Staines, there to be tried by a court martial; to which place the officers ordered me to be marched on foot, with my hands cuffed. When I arrived, I found the court

assembled; and after the accusation had been laid by the captain, I was asked if I had any one to speak in my behalf. I told them I had not, not being aware that Lord Robert had intended to be there, to whom they took care to send the information too late. I was then told that I had liberty to speak for myself. I began by saying, that the corporal of the guard had told us that if one of the three kept constantly in waiting, the others might be absent for an hour or two at a time. The chairman said, 'and what then?' I answered, that if he would take down, word for word, what I had already said, I would tell them what then: for, finding that they intended to be severe with me, I determined to keep them strictly to the rules of the martial law. He then enquired, where were the persons who relieved guard with me; but as they had not been ordered on the trial, post-horses were immediately sent to head-quarters to bring the corporal into court. When they had asked him a few questions, which proved the truth of what I had stated, they found it necessary to have the man who relieved guard with me at St. James's Palace, before they could go on with the trial; post-horses were immediately ordered to fetch him. One of the officers, being apparently ashamed of the proceedings, and of the disputes among themselves, then shut the door; when another rose up and opened it, knowing that it was contrary to martial law to have the door closed. Just as the post-horses were going for the other witness, one of the officers informed the

court that the man could not be in time, for they could not proceed with the trial, legally, after two o'clock. I was then called upon to give the remainder of my evidence against myself; after which I was remanded to head-quarters, with orders not to put the handcuffs on again.

"The next morning the troop was ordered to Lewisham in Kent, and I with them; and as nothing more was said to me on the subject, I concluded that the affair was closed. One of my comrades thinking the same, as we were walking together in the evening, congratulated me that all respecting the court martial was now over. The next morning, however, proved that we were mistaken; for about five o'clock orders were given to march me, as a prisoner, from West End into Lewisham; when two of my friends in the same troop came to me very much agitated, and enquired if I knew what was going forward; upon replying in the negative, they informed me that they were getting ready to picket me. I requested them not to alarm themselves, for I was confident they would not do it. Some time after this, during the day, the troops were marched into a meadow, and formed into a circle, with myself in the midst. The sentence of the court martial was then read to me; which was, that I should be severely picketted. Every thing being ready, I was called up by the quarter-master to receive the punishment; but I neither moved nor spoke. Perceiving this, he called out to the guard to bring me up; and they, in obedience to

his orders, offering to seize me for that purpose, I declared I would not be picketted. The quarter-master said, 'O, you will not be punished then, will you?' To which I replied, that I objected to the proceedings of the court martial as unjust, and therefore appealed to a general court martial. The officers appeared thunder-struck at my appeal; and the adjutant said, in a very serious tone of voice, 'Morris, as sure as you are a living man, you are wrong; and added, 'if you will go through the form of the punishment, upon my word and honour you shall not be hurt.' To this I made no answer; but several of the men said, that, if it could be allowed, they would as my substitute receive the punishment for me. No reply was made to the offer; but I was marched back again to my quarters, where I had not been more than an hour, when another guard arrived to take me to Greenwich; there I was confined in a room at Salutation stairs, with a sentinel over me day and night. From the patience and composure which I had manifested, the clerk of the troop said, 'he should like to have seen me on the picket, for he thought I expected that the Lord would send one of his angels to deliver me.'

"I remained in this confinement four days, without hearing any more of the matter, when a letter was brought me, by a servant of Lord R. Manners, to enquire how I was, and when they intended to bring me to a general court martial, requesting me to give him the earliest information on the subject. I

returned for answer, that he might be assured they would not suffer me to know any thing about it, but that he might gain information by an application to the Judge Advocate. I waited in this situation about five days longer, when I received a message, that Lord R. Manners was waiting in his carriage, at the end of the lane. I accordingly went to his carriage, the sentinel accompanying me, in which I had a long conversation with his Lordship. Among other things, he asked me if any person had advised me to appeal to a general court martial. I told him that no person had given me advice on the subject; but I appealed because I thought they had acted very wrong towards me. He asked me, if I could say that I was sorry to give the officers unnecessary trouble, as he thought it would be acting like a Christian to make the acknowledgment? I answered, that I was sorry to give any gentleman trouble on my account; I only wished to defend myself against oppression. Four days after this, the corporal of the guard came to me, and informed me that I was set at liberty from my confinement, and was ordered to wait on the commanding officer at Lewisham. When I saw him, I asked if he knew that I was set at liberty; he said yes; and told me, farther, to go and settle every thing with the regiment, for I was going to be discharged. Strict orders were given that my pay, and all money lent to the men, with every other demand on the regiment, should be paid up to that day.

"It is natural to suppose, that in the combination of trying circumstances which attended me, I must have had considerable anxiety; but, trusting to the justice of my cause, and to that God who has promised, 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be,' and 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,' my confidence in his promise never failed, but continued my support and consolation through the whole. The next day I received my discharge, and gave a receipt in full of all demands on the regiment."

At length then, by the kind providence of God, we see Mr. Morris at once delivered from the unpleasant circumstances of a military life, and the persecutions to which it continually exposed him. His conduct was such, that nothing which could constitute a ground of criminal proceedings against him could be discovered, till they find what, in its greatest possible guilt, was only pardonable inadvertency; and this they determined to notice with all the rigour of martial law. But is it not strange, that so respectable a body of officers should treat a man with such oppressive harshness, whose integrity and uprightness deserved their admiration, and whose principal crime was, that he felt religion to be a more important concern, and attended to its holy precepts with more seriousness and diligence than those around him? No man was ever persecuted for possessing a less share of religion than others; but, let his views and conduct be such as to prove that, while others have

only its "form," he feels its "power," and opposition will be immediately commenced. One who well knew human nature said, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." They had long been endeavouring, by rigorous treatment, to make Mr. M. renounce those principles and that conduct which had brought peace into his conscience; but in this they could not succeed: irritated by the unconquerable firmness of his mind, and the steady calmness of his temper, prejudice and passion carry them a point too far. After his hopes of deliverance, excited by the kind and strenuous efforts of his friends, had been disappointed, and the cloud of distress gathered thicker and darker, he little expected that deliverance was so nigh; and especially that it should come from the very quarter whence all his difficulties arose. Yet such is the mysterious manner in which God frequently brings good out of evil. While, like the patriarch, we are ready, in circumstances of distress, to cry, "All these things are against me," the great Governor of the universe is so conducting the arrangements of his providence as shall lead us, upon a review of "the way which he has led us," to exclaim, "He has done all things well." It seems that, conscious of the irregularity or too great severity of their proceedings, they were afraid or ashamed of the issue of a general court martial, and this led to his discharge. He left the regiment with no mark of ignominy, but honourably; and it is a pleasing proof of the attachment of some

of the soldiers to him, that they offered to suffer in his stead.

How must Mr. M. have admired the goodness and wisdom of Divine Providence, in thus realizing his wishes, in a way and at a time the most unexpected! No doubt but this engaged his heart to more devotedness to God, and probably served to fix more decidedly his determination to give himself up to the ministry of the gospel. May we learn to trust our Gracious Friend more firmly, and without hesitation! "The Lord will provide." "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Let us remember the case of our departed friend, as another proof that

"Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS letter will close that part of Mr. Morris's Memoirs which he himself dictated; which, though it includes the greater portion of his life, a period of more than forty years, will not exhibit such a variety of incident as the former part

of this Narrative. He might have said much more, but it would have principally related to his own usefulness: he was in the arms of death, and he chose to leave a life of active labours and extensive good to speak for itself.

"As soon as I was discharged, I went to London, to thank Lord and Lady Manners for the interest which they had manifested in my welfare, and the pains they had taken to serve me. They assured me, they were happy that I had obtained my discharge; and that such had been his lordship's anxiety on my account, that his horses were kept in harness every day, for a fortnight together, in order to serve me with promptitude, should the occasion require it. Her ladyship then enquired if I intended to go into the ministry. I told her I had such intentions, but that there were several things in the service of the Church of England to which I could not conscientiously conform. Lady Manners appeared very much surprised at this answer; she said I might find difficulties among the Dissenters also, and things which I might not like; and particularly wondered that I should turn my back on such an opportunity of doing good, so superior to what I could expect to meet with out of the Establishment; cautioning me, at the same time, not to expect perfection among the Dissenters, any more than in the Church of England. I certainly felt very great reluctance to act contrary to the wishes of one from whom I had received such distinguished favours: most of the articles, prayers, and

creeds of the Established Church I could at that time have agreed to; but could by no means reconcile myself to the administration of baptism according to the prescribed order of the Prayer Book, by which I should be bound to return God thanks, that the infant so baptised was 'regenerated with the Holy Spirit' of God, 'received for his own child by adoption, and incorporated into his holy church;' when, in truth, it was to be the business of my ministry to shew that every person was 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,' unless his understanding was enlightened, and his heart renewed, by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. Although Lord and Lady Manners appeared much disappointed at my scruples of entering into the Church, yet they continued their friendship to me.

"In June 1775 I came to Amersham, and soon married Martha, daughter of Henry Hobbs, who for many years had been a deacon of the General Baptist meeting in this place, and immediately settled in business. Soon after this, I received an invitation to supply the Particular Baptist church at Woodrow, about two miles from Amersham, their former pastor, Mr. Harris, having, through age and sickness, finished his work. After preaching to them some time, I received an unanimous invitation to become their pastor. On the 7th of October in the same year, myself, my wife, and a friend of ours, were agreeably to a former determination, baptised at Hemel Hempstead, by my friend Mr. Jones; and,

having preached before that church, I was, by them, called out to the work of the ministry. On June 4, 1776, I was ordained at Woodrow to the pastoral office of that church. Mr. Giles of Chenies began the service by prayer, and asked the usual questions; Mr. Jones prayed the ordination prayer, and preached from 2 Tim. ii. 15, 'Study to shew thyself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;' Mr. Sleap of Chesham prayed; and Mr. Blaine of New-Mill preached to the people from Heb. xiii. 15, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.' The service was conducted in an orchard near the meeting-house, as the people were too numerous to be contained within the walls.

"Some of my friends at Amersham, being very desirous of an evening lecture, I began one by preaching in my own house; but that being very soon too small, we fitted up a workshop in the yard for a meeting-house, in the year 1777. In the year 1783, about eight or ten persons, some belonging to the Baptist church at Woodrow, and others to the Independent church at Chesham, then under the pastoral care of Mr. Spooner, formed themselves into a church, and chose a deacon of each denomination, considering themselves united in one body, where 'there is neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all and in all.'

"The place in which we assembled at Amersham, being found too small, a subscription was begun among ourselves; and, with the assistance of some friends in London, sufficient money was raised to erect a meeting-house, which cost £256, the whole of which was paid October 6, 1784, being the day before the place was opened. The congregation and church at this place increasing very fast, it was thought best to remove the service entirely from Woodrow to Amersham: and in 1792 I accepted an invitation to take upon me the pastoral care of the church at Amersham, to which that of Woodrow was now united.

"The congregation and church still continuing to increase, we were under the pleasing necessity of enlarging our place of worship in the year 1797. We enlarged again in 1799, the expense amounting to £727. 0*s.* 2*d.*; which sum was paid before the opening of the meeting. The size of the present meeting-house is about 45 feet square, and will seat about 700 people. Since the first formation of the church to the present time, nearly 300 members have been added.

"I had not been long among the Dissenters before I found the remarks of Lady Manners too true; for some narrow-minded and itolerant professors expected me to adopt the whole of their creed without hesitation, before they could cordially give me the right hand of fellowship. They particularly objected to the plan of mixed communion which I had

adopted, which they thought would be conducive of discord and confusion. But I am happy to say, that, after a trial of thirty-four years, not the least altercation nor one unpleasant circumstance has arisen from it. When I occasionally met with a certain circle of ministers, I found I was to be catechised as to certain points of doctrine, which they appeared to suspect I did not view in the same light as they did. I believed the doctrines of the gospel, as far as I knew them; but I could not implicitly adopt the opinions of fallible men like myself when I did not understand them. After the examinations thus instituted into my belief, I felt myself grateful that I did not live in an age or country which might have subjected me to the power of the secular arm, for the alleged charge of heresy; but that all they could do was to circulate through town and country that I *denied* some of those doctrines, which I could not receive according to their explanations. I was thus the more induced to keep to my former determination, of searching the scriptures with prayer and supplication, that, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, I might receive all its doctrines, with its promises and precepts, as therein revealed, for the instruction, comfort, and direction, of every one who believes in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners: 'through whom we have access by one Spirit to the Father.' If, in adhering to this plan, I lost the good opinion of some of the leaders of sects and parties, who wish to tread under foot those who differ from them, it was made up to me by a more

intimate acquaintance with Jesus Christ and his apostles, as those who were ready to take me by the hand, and who, I was assured, would not lead me into any error respecting faith or practice. From them I was taught to love, not only those who adopted my sentiments, but all who appeared to be the followers of 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.'"

The substance of this letter reminds me of the homely couplet of John Bunyan:

> "A christian man is never long at ease,
> For when one trouble's gone another him doth seize."

The first trial which awaited Mr. Morris, after his deliverance from the gripe of oppression and the power of persecution, though one which must have occasioned no small pain to a mind of any sensibility, formed quite a contrast to those to which he had long been accustomed. Then—frowns, threats, and opposition, urged him to a dereliction from the path of duty; now—interest and conscience have opposing claims; a sense of gratitude and a conviction of duty point each to a different line of conduct. His generous heart felt the obligations under which the kind and condescending attentions of Lord and Lady Manners had laid him: these were seconded by a prospect of superior respectability in the station which he intended to occupy, and the advancement of his interests under a patronage so powerful as that which he had already experienced. But with him the claims of conscience and duty were paramount to

every consideration; though it cost him a pang, the sacrifice was made with cheerful decision.

It appears that at this time Mr. Morris had not those objections to the constitutions and ritual of the Church of England which he afterwards felt; but he had for some time past thought that the scripture did not warrant the baptism of infants; and he had also a particular objection to the manner in which this rite is administered in the Establishment, which, according to his view, considers it as imparting the grace of regeneration. From a careful and diligent perusal of the word of God, Mr. M. was fully convinced, that, to suppose any external rite productive of saving blessings, is subversive of all personal religion, and as pregnant with evil results as almost any dogma of the Church of Rome. Regeneration he conceived to be, a divine change wrought on the heart of man, through the medium of his understanding, by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit of God, and having no necessary connexion with baptism. So that if he could have reconciled his mind to the baptism of infants, he could not possibly have adopted the thanksgiving which the Prayer Book appoints after its administration, nor taught in the language of its catechism, that by this the infant is made "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

As soon as Mr. Morris was liberated, to fulfil the sarcastic prediction of the quarter-master, he returns to Amersham, prompted by gratitude and warmed

with zeal, to engage in that work which was to be the labour and happiness of his future life. He commenced and continued his ministerial office, as a *labourer* in the vineyard of the Redeemer. He took the oversight of his flock, not "for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." Like the great apostle of the Gentiles, he thought it no disgrace, that, to supply his people's lack of service, his own hands should minister to his maintenance. His congregation was, at first, but small, and his prospects not very flattering; but the God of all grace added a rich increase.

But if he met with success beyond his anticipations, he had also difficulties which he did not expect. The organization of his church, and its terms of communion, appeared to many of the denomination, the distinguishing tenets of which he had embraced, as an innovation of considerable consequence. Whether Mr. M. was mistaken or not, it was from the convictions of his mind that he adopted that broad scheme which has recently been advocated by the eloquent pen of Mr. R. Hall, pastor of the Baptist church at Leicester. His sentiment on this point Mr. M. held firm to the last, and read with no small pleasure the publication alluded to. Though his church was open to the admission of Baptists and Pædobaptists, which at first were equal in numbers, the former greatly prevailed, and some of the latter changed their sentiments in favour of those of their pastor; so that at present, in a large church, there are but a few who are not Baptists; and it certainly

is a proof of what christian love and forbearance can effect, that, during a period of thirty-four years, not a single interruption to their peace and comfort has arisen from this union. Mr. Morris thought, as I suppose most who favour mixed communion will think, that the case of Amersham church is a confirmation of what Mr. Hall advances on the policy and expediency of this measure. It, however, occasioned a considerable degree of coldness on the part of many, with whom Mr. M. was now in immediate connexion.

Nor was this the only thing which produced unpleasantness between Mr. M. and a few of his Dissenting brethren. *He* could not admit of any restrictions on personal and free enquiry, and would not be fettered by any system of opinions; *they* expected a more explicit declaration of every sentiment than he was disposed to give, and thought that, without a very near coincidence in the articles of faith, they could not unite or act together. The more earnest they were in demanding this as a condition of union, the more stedfast he was in refusing it, as an infringement on his independence and liberty. I do not know what his peculiar views were at this time; but it seems that, bacause he either did not, or was supposed not to believe every point which they considered orthodox, he fell under the imputation of being unsound; this induced them to keep aloof from him, to avoid making common cause with him, and to deal out their censures with an unsparing hand.

You well know that about thirty or forty years ago, the different denominations of professing Christians had not come so much into contact with each other as they have since; and hence they were not prepared to make those allowances for each other's peculiarities, and to exercise that candour which a better acquaintance seldom fails to produce. At the same time, among Calvinistic Dissenters there was an extreme jealousy of orthodoxy; so that any modification of the views of Dr. Gill, who was then considered almost oracular, or any deviation from the usual terms in which those doctrines were expressed, which he so firmly maintained, and so ably advocated, was considered as a certain mark of heterodoxy. The ministers alluded to were, I believe, all very excellent men; and much might be said, from the time and circumstances in which they lived, to account for their conduct towards him; still such an unlovely spirit does not well comport with the mild genius of Christianity, and its effects are obviously injurious to its interests, as it tends to destroy personal enquiry, to prevent mutual co-operation, and to split the religion of the Saviour into as many different interests as there are shades of diversity in the sentiments of its professors: and how few, who hold its essential doctrines, think alike in every particular. Mr. Morris was but a man;—he may have erred; but unkind treatment is not convincing logic. In the midst of it all, conscious integrity supported him, and success attended his labours. May we, my dear

friend, at the close of our lives, be enabled to review a scene of equal usefulness! He is now where party-feeling is no more; and, I doubt not, with those very ministers who could not cordially unite with him on earth, bows before "the throne of God and of the Lamb;" on whose grace they all relied, whose love they all felt, whose glory they all sought, and in whose presence, with all the family of heaven, they are infinitely and eternally blessed.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SHALL now inform you of a few particulars of Mr. Morris's life which occurred from the time of his settling at Amersham to the close of his pilgrimage; and which he either omitted, or to which he made but a very slight reference.

Soon after his return from London, Mr. M. availed himself for some time of the instructions of Mr. Clark of Chesham Bois, a pious and learned clergyman of the Establishment, who kept an academy, and prepared students for the university and for ordination. The means of support which his little flock were able to afford him were but very slender: it was

necessary, therefore, that he should do something to maintain himself and family; and the resources of his active, persevering mind, were soon brought into exercise, with considerable effect, in business of various kinds. He first took to that which Mrs. Morris's father had carried on for many years, in the brush-block and turning line. He afterwards added to this the business of a draper and grocer. In 1789, about fourteen years after his coming to Amersham, he conceived the project of establishing a cotton manufactory in the town. With this view he entered into partnership with Messrs. John and Thomas Hailey, and soon began building. By his own personal labour and superintendence, he fitted up all the apparatus of machinery necessary for spinning, weaving, and bleaching. In all manner of brass and iron work he was remarkably ingenious and clever, though quite self-taught. He constructed many philosophical machines, some of which he sold, and others kept for his own use: which he not only put together, as a watch-maker does the machinery of a time-piece, but he actually wrought a great part of the brass and iron work with his own hands. He seemed, indeed, to possess an ingenuity and ardour which accomplished every thing he undertook.

The calicoes made at the manufactory were found to be of a superior quality; this occasioned a large and increasing demand for goods, and it became necessary to extend the concern. Two additional partners were taken into the firm, and the business

flourished for many years, infusing life and activity into the trade of Amersham. Mr. M. now gave up the business which he had commenced with, and turned his attention to something more congenial to the activity and expansion of his mind. He never, I believe, received instruction in any department of scientific learning; but vigorous application subdued every difficulty and supplied every deficiency. He applied himself to land-surveying and architecture; in the latter of which he succeeded remarkably; and many buildings which he erected will, in all probability, long remain, as memorials of his skill in this department. You know the neat, the commodious, perhaps I should say, the elegant meeting-house of Mr. Douglas of Reading; this was erected by him, and on his own plan; as also his own meeting-house, some large breweries, manufactories, &c. Indeed, I am informed, there was an originality of plan and neatness of execution which distinguished all his architectural essays.

By this time he became acquainted with many of the most respectable ministers of his own denomination, and those of others, and was actively engaged in preaching at home, in the neighbourhood, and often in the metropolis. He now not only employed himself in the ministry, in business, and in philosophical pursuits, but in improving the minds of the young people of his acquaintance. For this purpose he devoted one evening in the week to giving lectures, familiar explanations, and shewing experiments, in

various departments of natural philosophy; to which not only the young people of his own congregation, but others also were freely admitted.

But Mr. Morris was not to experience the continued sunshine of prosperity. Owing, I believe, to the operation of the continental system, soon after the renewal of hostilities which followed the short peace of Amiens, the cotton trade in general declined. Messrs. Morris and Co. felt it. It became necessary to discharge some of the men. Things grew worse and worse, and ended in giving up the concern altogether. This was in 1807, after it had continued about eighteen years. The loss which Mr. M. sustained by this failure was considerable; and it was feared that the total ruin of his pecuniary concerns would be the consequence. But, through a kind Providence and the assistance of friends, he was enabled to arrange his affairs much better than had been anticipated, and had the satisfaction of seeing the creditors fully paid. This painful trial he bore with manly or rather with christian fortitude and exemplary patience. Soon after this loss, the benevolent design of employing the poor of the town, especially those who had been brought up to the business, induced Mr. Morris, in connexion with six gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, to purchase the property belonging to the manufactory, and re-commence the business; which was continued till 1809, when, having a large stock on hand, and no sale for the goods, it became necessary to relinquish the design

entirely, which was done with considerable loss. The stock and machinery were divided, and the estates sold by auction. But, notwithstanding this failure, the town still continues to enjoy advantages from Mr. M.'s project, as part of the premises is now occupied by a gentleman of London, who carries on the silk-crape manufactory, by which a number of persons are employed, and a considerable sum of money circulated weekly amongst the tradesmen of the place.

After this last failure Mr. M. relinquished business altogether, concentrated the remainder of his property, and adopted such plans of œconomy as enabled him to leave his family in tolerably comfortable circumstances. He was now 62 years of age; he justly considered that the narrow limits of human life forbad his calculating on many more years. The remnant of his days he was desirous of devoting to the concerns of his family, the welfare of his flock, and an habitual preparation for his departure to another world. But, though freed from the anxieties of business, other trials awaited him; among which was the loss of a deacon of his church, between whom and Mr. M. a friendship like that of David and Jonathan had long subsisted.

Mr. Potter had been, from the first formation of the church, an honourable member, and during the whole of this time had filled the office of deacon, the duties of which he discharged with zeal, diligence, and fidelity seldom equalled, and perhaps never surpassed. Their minds were similar—they were com-

panions in searching into the beauties of nature—they held sweet fellowship together, "as heirs of the grace of life; and for many years Mr. Morris took tea at his friend's house regularly every Monday evening. They, whose minds are susceptible of the sympathies of friendship, who have glowed with its ardour, and tasted its sweets, will not think the loss of such a friend trivial. This trial was rendered the more painful by the station which this bosom friend occupied, and the manner in which he filled it. You know well the importance of a judicious, active, and affectionate deacon; that, from the constitution of Dissenting churches, such an one is an invaluable blessing, both to a church and to its pastor. On the 16th of November, 1809, Mr. Morris had the affliction of hearing that his friend was thrown from a coach, and very seriously injured; but it was no small alleviation to his distress, that Mr. Potter was, during the whole of his short illness, so full of faith and comfort. He was often heard repeating, "O, to grace how great a debtor," &c. And on the Lord's day previous to his death, which happened November 28, he requested one of his sons to sing, "Thou dear Redeemer, dying lamb," &c.

From the period of this loss, Mr. M. began more seriously to think of his own dissolution, and to die to this world.

November 11, 1811, another tie which bound him to this world was cut, by the death of Mrs. Morris, with whom he had enjoyed domestic comfort for

more than thirty-six years. She entered into rest at the age of fifty-three.

A few years after this, I became acquainted with Mr. M.; and I well remember the substance of a conversation we once had on eternal things, from the impression which his remarks left upon my mind. He observed, with deep solemnity and sweet tranquillity, "I may now say, with the Apostle Paul, that I die daily. I live in the constant expectation of death; my age, and the infirmities I feel, are strong indications of its near approach; and I think it is highly probable, from the sensations I have in my head, that it may be rather sudden." At the same time he expressed himself perfectly easy on the subject; quite ready to depart—yet willing to wait, prepared for death—yet resigned to whatever the will of God might be. And this was not a temporary calm, interrupted by the agitations of fear, or the torment of discontent: in all my intercourse with him I found him exactly the same. Fully sensible of the importance of death and eternity, calculating on the speedy advance of his last enemy, the king of terrors, he coolly waited the attack, fearless of the result, and confident of final victory, through him "who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

I have been thinking, while writing this, on Dr. Doddridge's motto—*Dum vivimus, vivamus*—Let us live, while we live. Alas! what a blank are the lives of many! how little advantage does society derive from a

great portion of its members! While some dominant passion of depraved nature prompts the activity of many, others sink down into listlessness, and seem to live for scarcely any purpose but to eat, and to drink, and to sleep. No concern for their immortal welfare wakes the energies of their minds. The wonders of nature tempt not their curiosity—its glories excite not their admiration. They feel no desire to trace the perfections of their Maker, in the volume of creation, or in the book of God. They seem to live without an object, to act without an end; at least, without any purpose worthy of a rational and immortal creature. Their passions play about the centre of their own little selves. They die, and are not missed in the church or in the world; their loss is not felt beyond their own domestic circle. But such was not our departed friend. The wonders of creation attracted his attention, and excited investigation. He loved "to follow nature up to nature's God;" but his supreme delight was in those contemplations to which the sacred page of inspiration directs our minds. The renewing grace of God had given his mind a useful and a happy turn; it led him to consider the brevity of life, and to "work while it is called to-day." The world was benefited by his example, and the church by his labours. His talents, his industry, and the extent and variety of his business, gave him a very considerable influence in Amersham. He was considered, both by Episcopalians and Dissenters, as a common benefit. His assistance

was sought by most in cases of difficulty and distress; to advise in perplexities, to console in affliction, and to adjust differences. As a man of business, he did as much as many whose sole occupation it is; and as a minister, there are but few, perhaps, whose time is devoted exclusively to the ministry, who have done more. But short is the span of human life: he had now nearly completed his "threescore years and ten," and "the time of his departure was at hand." An account of his last moments I shall reserve for my next, and shall therefore conclude by assuring you that

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE have traced Mr. Morris in his journey through life; let us now attend him at its close. We have remarked the rise and progress of religion in his soul, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;" we shall now see the heavenly Husbandman "put in the sickle because the harvest is come," and gather home to himself "a shock of corn fully ripe."

The growing infirmities of Mr. Morris's age, rendered it necessary that, for some time before his

death, he should have assistance in his ministerial labours. He could not continue to preach three times on the Lord's day. The forenoon service was, for some years before his death, taken by Mr. Dorrell, a deacon of his church, and occasional assistance was rendered by neighbouring ministers. In the year 1815, Mr. Morris, believing that the time was fast approaching when he should leave the church below, was anxious that every thing respecting the meeting and his flock, should be settled in such a manner as to prevent disputes from arising after his death. He therefore proposed that new deeds should be made, to secure and convey in trust, the ground given at different times, by himself and Mr. Wm. Morton, one of the deacons, for enlarging the meeting house and burying ground. Younger trusts were chosen, and new deeds were made, not only to secure the ground already given, but to prevent any one who should hereafter possess his property adjoining, from building workshops, houses, or any thing which might darken or incommode the place of worship, or obstruct the way to it. Every thing of this kind being settled, there appeared but one thing more that he wished to have done, which was, to have the path from the street to the meeting house paved, which was done agreeably to his wishes. He had now lived to see the meeting house built, twice enlarged, well secured, and the only thing which was wanting to render it complete effected; but in superintending this last improvement, towards the close of 1816, he

caught a severe cold, which produced a serious indisposition, that for some time entirely suspended his pastoral duties, and confined him from the public services of the sanctuary.

The seclusion of a sick chamber, must be a gloomy solitude to him, who knows no other pleasures than those which the world, and the things of the world afford. But Mr. M. had been taught to derive his happiness from a higher and more permanent source. He knew how to appreciate every earthly comfort which a beneficent Providence vouchsafed; he could enjoy the pleasures of the social circle; and he delighted in the solemnities of public worship: but no change of outward circumstances could interrupt his intercourse with the "Father of Spirits," remove the basis of his hope, or dry up the fountain of his joy. That grace which cheered the hearts of the disciples, and inspired their praises at midnight, when imprisoned, sore with stripes, and fastened in the stocks, imparted to his mind a "peace which passeth understanding." In the "days of darkness" God was his "sun and his shield." His mind was calm—his hope was strong—for he knew that all which concerned him, as to his life or death, time or eternity, was under the gracious superintendence of infinite wisdom and goodness.

At this time, by his particular request, two of his junior brethren in the ministry, met once a month at his house, to spend an hour or two in conversation on some religious subject previously proposed. One

which, I think, at his suggestion was discussed, was: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." When the state of departed saints, before and after the resurrection of the body, was the leading topic of discourse. You may well suppose that the situation of Mr. M. on the borders of eternity, with the expectation of very soon associating with the "spirits of the just made perfect," gave additional interest to this interview.

After this, our friend recovered sufficient strength to resume his labours occasionally; and several of his discourses appeared to indicate the state of his mind, relative to his approaching change; such as Job xxx. 23. "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Matt. xxv. 46. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

On the 13th of April, 1817, the last Lord's day he was ever to preach, his texts were; in the afternoon, Rom. ix. 6. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." In the evening, Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, but principally the 2d verse. "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love."

The next day he had intended to go to London on a trial, had not the weak state of his health induced him to decline the journey. It seems quite providential that this was the case; before the Monday

arrived, a precursor of his last change announced his speedy removal to that city, "whose builder and maker is God." In the night, after the services of the Sabbath, he was seized with a stricture on his breath, so severe as to threaten immediate death. But in a few hours he revived sufficiently to answer the enquiries of his medical attendants. His first expression relative to the state of his mind, was an acknowledgment of the divine goodness, and of the worth of religion. "What a mercy that I am not in London now, but at home, and among kind friends. And, what a mercy, that I have not religion to seek, now I stand in so much need of its support and consolations!

After this, for some time he appeared, except occasional slight returns of a similar affection, likely to regain a tolerable share of strength, and though it was the opinion of his medical friends, that the resumption of his ministerial duties, even if practicable, would be hazardous, and he was therefore advised altogether to decline any future engagements in them—yet his heart was in these services, and contrary to expectation, he was enabled once more, and but once more, to administer the Lord's supper to the people of his charge. This was the first of June, and, I am informed, the service was peculiarly solemn and impressive. He embraced this opportunity of expressing his gratitude for the kind attention and assistance which he had received from ministers and friends; but especially to God,

for the support and comfort afforded him throughout his illness: remarking at the same time, that his hopes were firmly fixed on the promises of God, and his consolations neither few nor small.

The last time he ascended the pulpit, from which he had been accustomed for so many years to dispense the word of life, was Wednesday evening, June 11th. The subject he chose was very appropriate: Psalm lxxiii. 24. "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and receive me to glory." He preached for about twenty minutes, principally on the former part of the verse. He had proved its truth by his own experience: God had been the guide of his youth, and had not forsaken him in his old age. The latter part of the verse he proposed to leave to some future opportunity; but ere this opportunity arrived, he was himself "received to glory."

"The cause, however, of the first attack" (observes his medical friend, referring to this period of his illness,) "still remained, and in no long time his breathing exhibited again something of the same difficulty. It is unnecessary to detail the progress of the disease; from its symptoms, its seat was believed to be in the heart, or its immediate vicinity; and the relief therefore of its distresses, which were often severe, was not expected to be more than temporary. It is well known, that in such disorders the sufferings are often, however urgent, not of a nature to interrupt the functions of the mind. In this case, the remarkable

powers of the intellect were to the last unclouded. The body laboured—the spirit was free."

For the short period his life was protracted, he continued to enjoy the most complete composure of mind. All his temporal affairs were prudently arranged, and directions given respecting his funeral. His conversation with those who visited him was in the highest degree pleasing and encouraging. To a young friend he expressed himself in nearly the following words: "How far I have been useful in the world, another day must prove; but of one thing I am certain, that my aim and desire have been to do good to mankind. If I am to live a few weeks longer, it will be to answer some end which God sees fit. I am therefore resigned to his will; what he determines will be best. But if I were to consult my feelings, I should humbly say, 'What thou doest, do quickly.'"

You will not wonder that my visits to him were not very frequent, considering my engagements at home; but when I did approach the scene of his last conflict, I had every reason to consider it as a privilege. An interview with him at this season could scarcely fail of impressing the mind with a sense of the infinite importance of eternal things, and the worth of religion; while it was happily adapted to encourage a dependance on his grace and power, who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." After recovering from a severe paroxysm, in which toiling for breath, he appeared every moment ready to

breathe his last, he grasped my hand and said, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." I observed to him on one occasion, that I thought many humble followers of Jesus Christ were, "through fear of death, all their life subject to bondage;" and I mentioned a friend of his, who could never overcome a dread of the *act of dying*, even in those seasons when he felt fully satisfied as to his future happiness. Upon enquiring how he felt on this subject, now death was so nigh, he replied to this effect: that he had long been in the habit of contemplating it, and therefore death was not an unexpected visitor; that he considered the stroke inevitable, and had made up his mind to it; that from his age he could not long expect, and from his increasing infirmities he could not desire, to live much longer; and especially, that the promise of a faithful God, and the prospect of a glorious heaven, completely reconciled him to it.

July 4th, to a friend who came a few miles to see him, he said: "Such has been my joy throughout my illness, that, if my strength would admit, I could sing the praises of God, for his goodness and mercy towards me. It is not on account of any thing that I have done that I expect heaven, but I rest entirely on the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ." At another time he said: "I have not any fear of the Lord's deserting me, for his word is gone forth, that

he "will never leave nor forsake me," and in his word I trust.

One day after recovering from a violent attack of his disorder, he said; "it appeared to me as though all the world was gone, and nothing left but myself; but my mind was running at the same time on those lines of Watts;

"Were I in heaven without my God,
'Twould be no joy to me;
And while the earth is my abode,
I long for none but thee."

After a restless night, he remarked; "How much I have suffered? But I have found comfort in thinking on those words; 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." A friend who stood near, spoke to him of the confidence he felt, and the consolations he enjoyed. He replied,

"How can I sink with such a prop
As my eternal God."

During a night of great suffering, he said at intervals, "Prepare me, Lord, for thy right hand."—"He will not lay on me more than I am able to bear."—"Though painful at present 'twill cease before long."—He often requested to have the scriptures read to him, particularly the 3d chapter of St. John, and the 3d chapter of the first epistle of St. John.

The general respect entertained for him, was strongly expressed by the solicitous enquiries respecting his health, and the attentions paid to him by all descriptions of people. Among which, it would be improper not to mention the peculiar kindness of his medical attendants, who watched over him with an anxiety and assiduity which could scarcely be exceeded by fraternal or filial affection. These tokens of respect and attachment from his family and friends he often noticed with gratitude, and applied to them the language of Dr. Watts,

> "Children and friends are blessings too,
> "If God our Sovereign makes them so."

On Saturday, July 26th, he was taken much worse, and did not speak except when asked a question; and then could only answer, yes, or no; till about 6 in the evening, when he appeared to be earnestly engaged in supplication and praise to God: which gave his friends who surrounded his bed a pleasing opportunity of knowing the state of his mind, when the hand of death was evidently on him. Some of the sentences which could be understood were these: "For ever with the Lord shut in, and earth exchanged for heaven."—"Exhaustless joy for ever and ever."—"Joy and eternal bliss for ever and ever."—"His promises are yea and amen."—"Welcome sweet hour of everlasting rest." Through the whole of this night he was very restless, and though perfectly sensible, could scarcely answer a question. During the Sabbath, life was ebbing fast, and he took but little

notice of any one. In the evening his breath grew shorter—and continued so till a quarter after two o'clock on Monday morning, July 28th, when, without a struggle or a groan, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Such were the last moments of our departed friend. How different have been the death-bed scenes, which, in the course of our ministerial visits, we have sometimes witnessed! We have seen some sinking into the grave with the most awful insensibility to the importance of that eternity on which they were entering; and others who had deferred seeking the things that belong to their peace as long as health remained, beginning to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved," only when death appeared in view, whose bodily pains were increased by the keen sensations of a wounded spirit, and their dying moments embittered by the most dreadful anxiety respecting the future, and a fearful apprehension of "judgment and fiery indignation." But while Mr. M. was sensibly alive to all the solemnities of his approaching change, he could view it without dismay, having found "peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That same grace, the transforming power of which had changed his heart, under the influence of which he had lived, supported him when "heart and flesh failed." The Sun of Righteousness gilded with his rays the dark "valley of the shadow of death," and the beams of divine glory irradiated his departing spirit. He was indeed favoured above many whose piety has been unquestionable, whose timidity of mind, or the nature

of their disorder has caused their confidence and comfort to fluctuate in the last struggle; or to whom God, for wise ends unknown to us, has not vouchsafed such a measure of joy and triumph, but who, resting on the Saviour, have gone equally safe to heaven. *Trust*, not *transport* is the criterion of safety: "*whosoever believeth* on him, shall never perish but have everlasting life." Still, these comforts in a dying hour are a peculiar favour: they support the individual, encourage others, and afford an unanswerable argument in favour of the religion of Christ. Where, among the philosophers of antiquity, or modern sceptics, to whom the term is falsely applied, shall we find any thing comparable to this? The death of Socrates, the brightest light of the heathen world, approached nearest to that of a christian; but the shades of uncertainty hovered over his mind; the dark mists of pagan superstition were too thick for his reason completely to penetrate. Who is there existing that would not prefer these solid supports, these truly rational—these divine consolations, to that compound of remorse and obduracy, superstition, and infidelity, which attended the exit of Voltaire; or the affected and absurd levity of Hume, who entered eternity joking. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

On Tuesday the 5th of August, his mortal remains were carried to the meeting-house which he had erected, and which had long been the scene of his pious labours, attended by a considerable number of mourning relatives and friends, and by several ministers,

six of whom supported the pall. A funeral discourse was then preached to a crowded audience by Mr. Sexton, minister of the New Connexion of General Baptists at Chesham, with whom Mr. M. had lived in uninterrupted friendship for nearly thirty years, from 1 John iii. 21, 22, 23, 24; which passage of scripture Mr. M. had selected with peculiar reference to the welfare of his surviving flock. After which the congregation retired to the adjoining burying ground; the corpse was deposited in a vault adjoining that of his beloved friend and deacon, and on the coffin of his wife, who had been interred there a few years before; and an address was delivered by your friend. In these mournful solemnities, every spectator appeared to feel a deep interest, and to consider the removal of such a man a general loss.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE love to preserve the likeness of one who has been dear to us, and to cherish the remembrance of him after his departure from our society on earth; and the scripture declares, that "the memory of the just is blessed." I shall therefore, in this last epistle, attempt, not an eulogium on departed excellence, but a brief and faithful sketch of Mr. Mor-

ris's character, which may be recognized and attested by all who knew him. Long after the present generation shall have passed away, the friends of the dissenting interest in Amersham will be desirous of knowing something of the person and character of him, who was, if not the founder, yet the means of reviving and of raising it to what it now is.

In his person Mr. Morris was tall and well proportioned; his height was six feet two inches, and his features seemed to indicate a mild and calm dignity of mind. His appearance, I am informed by some who were among his first acquaintances at Amersham, was, when in his regimentals, peculiarly striking, and calculated to excite respect, and a strong prepossession in his favour at first sight. The portrait which accompanies this was, I understand, a correct likeness when he was about fifty-five years of age.

It is sufficiently apparent from these memoirs, that he possessed much constitutional firmness of mind. Indeed in whatever conscience and duty were concerned he was immoveable as a rock. Yet there was nothing rough or austere about him; he was equally distinguished for mildness and affability.

In the sentiments he adopted, and the conduct he pursued, he was in the highest degree independent; he derived his religious principles from the scriptures of truth, and was resolved, in religion to "call no man master upon earth." It was thought by some that he carried this rather too far; but all who knew him, could readily believe, that he acted not from caprice, but from conviction. He was not hasty in

forming his opinions, but when, after a careful examination, he was fully persuaded of the truth of any sentiment, it would I imagine, have affected him but very little, if the whole world had pronounced it heresy. He was, at the same time, perfectly willing that others should think and act for themselves, and never thought it a sin in any to differ from him.

He was as candid and liberal in his views of others, and in the construction he put upon their principles and actions as could be wished—and, perhaps, more so. His failings (and who is without them?) ran in this channel; if he erred it was in an excess of liberality. Different opinions will be formed of his conduct in this respect, by different persons. There was scarcely any thing which he disliked more than a narrow, party spirit: but he was not outrageous with such persons, he rather pitied them. Of all bigots in the world deliver me from candid bigots; from those who, in the plenitude of their candour, spit the very "gall of bitterness" on all who are not gifted with their sort of liberality.

With these qualities, it is to be supposed that he maintained a considerable degree of equanimity of mind. It was not a little which could discompose him, or produce the ebullitions of passion. It is well known that he has been vilified and abused, not only by the circulation of malignant falsehoods, but even by the most exasperating language to his face; which he bore without any resentment, and his only return was a smile. Trials and afflictions of the most painful kind, seldom or never excited a murmuring ex-

pression: he has been often heard consoling himself in the language of David; "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Prosperity did not appear improperly to elate him; nor adversity unduly to depress him. That composure of mind which was natural to him, was strengthened by the power of religion; by the views he had of the wisdom, love, and faithfulness of his Heavenly Father. In him was exemplified that scripture: "Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Perseverance and assiduous industry also marked his character. His plans were not the abortions of a weak mind. He did not slumber over his purposes, and spend his life in forming projects which never proceeded beyond intention—which passed away "as a dream when one awaketh." Whatever he thought worth doing he attempted; and in almost every thing he attempted, he succeeded: a persevering diligence carried him through opposing difficulties. Hence as a manufacturer, as a builder, as a minister, he accomplished so much.

In his intercourse with his friends he was cheerful and agreeable. Though he never aimed at engrossing the conversation to himself, he seldom failed to enliven the social circle, by his general information, added to a considerable knowledge of the world, and a fund of anecdotes which he had acquired by the various scenes through which he had passed, and the many different characters with which he had become

acquainted. His attachments were not instantaneously formed; but they were steady. The current of his friendship did not resemble the mountain stream, leaping from rock to rock with noise and foam; it was like the flow of a gentle rivulet, which meanders though the valley, uninterrupted in its course, and silent in its progress.

His character and conduct, as a christian, were, I believe, during his whole residence at Amersham, a period of more than forty years, quite unimpeachable. There was great opposition to the dissenting interest, when he came first to the town; but he outlived prejudice, and gained universal respect. Even those, who, from attachment to the National Church, did not approve of his principles as a dissenter, esteemed him highly as a man of wisdom, peace, and piety. All who are possessed of real religion, are not equally eminent for every grace. The richest flower in the garden of nature has not every beauteous tint in the same degree of perfection. The lineaments of the divine image are pourtrayed on every renewed mind; but in such a manner as to leave distinguishing features in all. A general resemblance is combined with a characteristic difference. This is observable, even in the apostles of our Lord, and a little intercourse with the religious world will be sufficient to render this apparent. Some christians are distinguished by an ardent and unquenchable zeal, an unremitted diligence and activity in the work of the Lord: some by their complete detachment from the

world, and a spirituality of mind which leads their thoughts and discourse almost perpetually to divine things; and others by love, tender compassion, "bowels of mercies," and all the softer graces of christianity. Those which appeared most eminent in our departed friend were, fearless decision, integrity, constancy, humility, meekness, patience, submissive resignation, unshaken fortitude, and a charity which embraced "*all* who in *every* place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I do not exactly know what his attainments were in classical learning; I believe they were not considerable. In the early part of his ministry he paid some attention to the original languages of the Bible, but it is thought, this study was not long continued. He seemed rather to delight in scientific pursuits: the researches of the microscope, the wonders of the telescope, the properties of air, and the phenomena of electricity, were among his favourite studies. There were indeed but few subjects of general knowledge on which he possessed not some information; and in his knowledge of human nature, he particularly excelled. Whether his acquaintance with theological subjects in general, was equal to his attainments in other departments, it is not easy, perhaps, to decide; some who knew him think it was not. However this may be, it is well known, he was no friend to bodies of divinity and systematic theology. What he conceived the Bible taught he received, and paid no attention to any other authority. He believed the fall of man, the divinity and atonement of the

Saviour, the agency of the Holy Spirit in renewing the mind, that salvation is of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that a holy life is a necessary evidence of a state of grace. But I suppose there is no denomination, the whole of whose peculiar sentiments he embraced. He was probably nearer what is termed, by way of distinction, moderate Calvinism, than any other system. Civil and religious liberty, he considered the birth-right of every one, and was very jealous of encroachment by any power, temporal or ecclesiastical. His pulpit talents were, from what I can gather, more solid than brilliant; and his public addresses directed more to the understanding than to the passions. He was always more useful than popular. Whenever a controverted point of doctrine or practice was the subject of discourse, he discovered considerable acumen and skill in managing it; but such discussions were tempered with so much real candour, and so free from every thing which could irritate passion, or provoke even prejudice itself, that he seldom failed to conciliate the good will of those in his congregation who differed the most widely from him.

It is not necessary, after what has been noticed in these memoirs, to say much respecting the usefulness of Mr. M. As a christian, in his various engagements in business, and in his intercourse and connexion with almost all sorts of characters, his life was a constant sermon—his conduct was a powerful appeal to the conscience, on the truth, the power and the excellence of the religion of Christ. In the course

of his ministry, it has already been stated, nearly 300 persons joined the church of which he was the pastor, and most of these were brought to the knowledge of the truth by his instrumentality, nor did he labour unsuccessfully in other places. But the usefulness of a minister is not to be estimated only by the number of persons who receive their first religious impressions under his ministry: there are many other ways of assisting and advancing the interests of religion, which in their bearings and result, may be, perhaps, of equal consequence. At Amersham, by his labours, the congregation was increased from a few who met in a room to six or seven hundred; this society also became the parent of others in the neighbourhood, and has been the means of introducing the gospel into several villages; a neat and commodious meeting-house has been erected, and left, unincumbered with debt, for the use of succeeding generations; his peaceable disposition and his candid mind, were the means of diffusing through his church a similar spirit, and of preventing the growth of that hyper-calvinistic bitterness, and, if two words so opposite may be brought together, that gospel-pride, its inseparable attendant, which are the torment of ministers, the plague of churches, and the bane of religion. In a word, he gave respectability to a cause which had long been despised, and laid a foundation for the most enlarged success. If he had not entirely the honour of planting this interest, he found it as a vine neglected, destitute of foliage and of fruit, its branches withered and trampled on;

under the divine blessing, by his assiduous care, he raised it, reared it, bestowed years of cultivation on it, and had the pleasure of beholding its branches extend, laden with rich clusters, and promising increasing abundance. So that whatever may be the success of future ministers, it may be said; he has laboured and others have entered into his labours.

I shall conclude this sketch by an extract from a letter of the excellent and worthy minister who preached his funeral sermon, and who during an intimacy of so many years, had a fair opportunity of knowing him.

"From the commencement of my acquaintance with him, to his death, he evidently appeared to possess the great essentials, principles, and properties of a truly good man—a real believer in Christ; and in some of them he considerably excelled. True, genuine humility, meekness, and gentleness, uniformly dwelt in his enlarged mind, and shone in all the parts of his conduct. Patience and submission under the heaviest trials, shewed themselves in a most exemplary manner to all around him. It may be justly said too, he was a man of peace: he knew its importance, he loved it, he promoted it, he followed it in the way of righteousness with all men; and he was much favoured with it, in his own soul, in the church of God, and among his neighbours and acquaintance in general. He was a wise friend to consult, and faithful to keep the things committed to him in confidence. Defamation, backbiting, &c. he discountenanced, by a reproving silence or a faithful word.

In the circle of friends, he could cause, and partake of innocent cheerfulness; but had the happy art of joining solid edification with it. He formed his judgment of religious truth as evidence appeared to him, and spoke and professed it without regard to the many or the few, but in goodwill to all. He knew that another had the same right to think and judge for himself as he had; he was therefore the affectionate brother, though he might differ in opinion. In his preaching he spoke without the fear of man, with affection, earnestness, and plainness, and was rendered a very useful minister to many souls. While I grieve at the loss of my honoured friend, I often think with a grateful pleasure, on the many profitable conversations we had together, and on the many years of peaceful acquaintance we enjoyed. I remember to have been much impressed the first time I saw him, not only by the fine figure of the man, the noble appearance he made in his regimentals, but by the seriousness which appeared in him, which was then so unusual in a soldier. But how much more striking is the appearance of that servant of God now, in the heavenly world, "clothed in white robes," and having a palm of victory in his hands. May you, my dear Sir, and may I, be made meet to follow him to the realms of glory."

To this closing wish of a pious heart, I cordially add, including the friend to whom I write, and "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, Amen and Amen."

I am, &c.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

IT is highly probable that, as Mr. Morris read much, and thought closely, he had sometimes committed his thoughts to writing: if, however, he had any papers of this kind by him, they were most likely burned, with others committed to the flames, when he was setting his house in order for death, except one which was the mere beginning of a plan he had in view, to trace the history of religion in Amersham, principally among the Dissenters, from the time of Wickliffe to his own days. It is to be regretted that this was begun so late in life. He might have possessed materials for this, and had sources of information, of which his friends know nothing.

The Borough of Amersham was formerly noted for the general reception of the Doctrines of Wickliffe; but I have not been able to meet with any fact, by which I could trace the history of the Lollards at this place, before the year 1495, or that throws any light on the precise time of their first appearance here, only that Lutterworth, of which place Wickliffe was Rector, and Amersham were in the same Diocese. It appears that the adherents to these opinions in Amersham, were numerous, and organized into a Church as far back as the year 1495, and were distinguished by the name of *known-men*, or *just-fast men*, on account of the secu-

rities which they mutually gave, and the confidence which they reposed in each other. They enjoyed the labours of four teachers, who all of them obtained the crown of martyrdom. William Tilsworth, Thomas Chase, Thomas Mann, and Robert Cosin suffered at this place. Tilsworth in a close called Stanley, his own daughter being barbarously compelled to kindle the fire that consumed him. Others were treated with great severity about this time, by Smith, bishop of Lincoln, and Langham, the successor of Smith, who was a still more rigorous inquisitor; so that from 1518 to 1521, multitudes were exposed to suffering. Fox records some pleasing and curious particulars respecting the means by which the knowledge of the truth was at that time diffused, and especially respecting the circulation of portions of sacred Scripture in Wickliffe's translation.

Thus we see that the doctrines of the reformation had taken root before the time of Luther, by the preaching and writing of Wickliffe, the precursor of the reformation in England. Indeed, a just estimate hath not yet been formed of the vast benefit which accrued to the world from the exertions of this astonishing man, whose appearance at that period, and in all its circumstances, was a prodigy. It was by his writings that the mind of John Huss was enlightened, whose sentiments were retained among the Bohemian Taborights and Calxtines, until the rise of Luther. Strype records the mutual attachment between John Knox and the people of Amersham in these words. In the year 1553, Knox having gone to some parts of Buckinghamshire in his itinerant course of preaching, took a particular liking to the people of this place, partly from the crowds that flocked to hear him, and partly from their civilities towards him, which shewed that the seed sown by the followers of Wickliffe had never been altogether eradicated. Two years after this Knox was accused of high treason at Frankfort in Germany, whither he had fled from persecution, for words originally spoken to the inhabitants of Amersham, respecting the rumoured marriage of Queen Mary with Philip the son and heir of Charles the Fifth, a match that was generally dreaded by thinking men. The passage on which they rested their accusation was as follows: "O England, England, if thou wilt obstinately contract marriage confederacy, or league, with such princes as do maintain and ad-

vance idolatry, such as the Emperor who is no less enemy to Christ than ever was Nero! If for the pleasure of such Princes thou return to thy old abominations before used under the papistry, then assuredly, O England, thou shalt be plagued, and brought to desolation, by the means of those whose favour thou seekest." The other passages relate to the cruelty of the English Queen. The magistrates of Frankfort were perplexed in consequence of this accusation, lest it should come to the ears of the Emperor, and they should be obliged to deliver him up; so that his friends advised him to retire of his own accord from Frankfort, with which he complied; and again visited his friends at Geneva; agreeably to the advice of his Lord; "If they persecute thee in one city flee unto another."

The compiler of these memoirs is not aware of any document which can afford any further information till 1675, when the church-book of the General Baptists records the formation of a church of seventeen members. But this was only a separation, in all probability, from a much larger body. The cause of separation was, that this minority considered the laying on of hands after baptism enjoined by the New Testament. It seems also that these people could not submit to the marriage ceremony of the Church of England, and therefore performed it publicly in their own congregation. They also protested against oaths as sinful, and in some other points resembled the Society of Friends. How long that church from which they separated had existed cannot now be ascertained. It must have been some years, as they were then a regularly organized body, and from the little attention paid to the seceders, it is natural to suppose that the parent society constituted a very large majority. There is indeed, on the

first page of the book referred to, a name written in a very different hand from the rest, and of a much earlier date, thus: [*Brother David, 27th of Aprill,* 1626.] This date is but 73 years after the preaching of Knox, the Scottish reformer, at Amersham, whom such crowds attended; and as there were persons organized into a distinct church, apparently on the independent plan of church-government long before the coming of Knox, there is every probability that a society of this kind existed at the date referred to.

There is a document remaining of a church of Particular or Calvinistic Baptists in 1726. These, it seems, built a place of worship at Woodrow in 1730, while the general Baptists still remained at Amersham. Of this church at Woodrow, Mr. Morris became the pastor in 1776, and in a few years after this church again removed to Amersham, where under the ministry of Mr. M. it increased to its present extent.

There appears then great probability that from the time of Wickliffe, the doctrines of the reformation have been held at Amersham by a body of pious people; that these have been mostly dissenters from the national church whether popish or protestant; and that these, at least for the last 150 years, have been principally Baptists.

No. 2.

The following letter, written by Mr. Morris, was sent to the Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle, and inserted in it, occasioned by the remarks of the Edinburgh Reviewers on a publication of Mr. (now Dr.) Styles, in which he had animadverted on an article in the Review, entitled, Methodism and Missions.*

SIR,

FROM what I have occasionally observed in the Edinburgh Review, I was led to believe that the authors of that distinguished work were warm friends to liberty; and, from their sentiments on the Catholic question, I concluded that they were, in a particular manner, friends to religious toleration. My surprise, therefore, was naturally great, when I opened the last number, and found these gentlemen, on whom I had been accustomed to look with so much favour, bursting into rage against so large a body of people as the Dissenters of this country, all of whom, if I rightly understand them, they seem disposed to stigmatize as Methodists. The numerous sectaries which they include under this denomination, they are pleased to characterize as fanatics, raving enthusiasts, and canting hypocrites, because shoemakers and carpenters are to be found among them; and, what is still worse, because such people should presume to think, speak, and write on religious subjects. But with every degree of submission, and with all due respect for their high attainments, I must take the liberty of reminding these pretended advocates for freedom, that the most valuable privilege of Protestants, is, liberty to inquire into every theological question, and to form a decision according to the light of revelation, and the conviction of their own minds. True Christian faith must be what it is by sincere individual conviction. But if the Inquisition, the Catholic church, or any other church, or a synod of reviewers, armed with the power of the state,

* Edinb. Rev. April, 1809, page 40.

commanded men to believe, on pain of death, that two and two are seven, a canting hypocrite might say, with one of the apostles of infidelity, that he believed as the church believed: honest men, however, pretend to no such power over their own faith.

The divines (for such there are, I presume, among the Reviewers) cannot be ignorant that the guidance of the public mind, in the great concern of religion, was committed for a thousand years to a host of dignified priests and bishops, with a supreme pontiff, endowed with infallibility, at their head. And whither did they conduct the nations of Europe, but into the most dismal night of ignorance, foolish superstition, diabolical intolerance, and bloody persecution? We are not, therefore, now to be told that this business would be improved by placing it exclusively in the hands of any order of men, not even in those of the Edinburgh Reviewers. The productions of these gentlemen, on most subjects, I admire; but when they meddle with religion, they are evidently as unequal to the task, as to write a history of the inhabitants of Saturn; and for this plain reason, that, with all their erudition, they know nothing of the one or the other. Yet I would not speak disparagingly either of their erudition or their eloquence. For who, of even common sense or common observation—who is there among the lovers of the drama, who must not exclaim with the Reviewers, in the words of their fine panegyric on the theatre, as the best school for virtue and religion—"*Where is every feeling more roused in favour of virtue? Where is goodness so feelingly, so enthusiastically, learned? Where such sobs and cries, in involuntary homage to that God who made the heart?*"—"What wretched infatuation" would it be, Sir, "to interdict," even if we could, the amusements of observers so accurate, of moralists so sublime, as these! They aim only to be rational Christians! And these effusions are nothing more than the sober language of rational Christians, discussing the irrational enthusiasm of a company of mechanics, the expression of whose feelings, when excited by hearing the words of the Saviour of mankind repeated by one of their own order, is compared to nothing better than "drunken declamation!" But although these dramatic and reviewing divines avow so deep a hatred to that form of the Christian religion which is professed by "these very impudent people," they pledge them-

selves to omit no opportunity of defending "sober and rational Christianity from the tiger-spring of infidelity." Thus they have no objection to become the honourable advocates of religion and the stage! But woe be to the man who professes a different creed from that which they have espoused, or who presumes to lift his voice against their verdict!

Were I to take the liberty of throwing out a suggestion to these our rational Reviewers, I should tell them, that, if they would serve the interests of Christianity, they must first themselves become its humble disciples, and drink of the spirit and temper of its divine Author; for without humility every profession of regard for Christianity is a vain pretence. Though they complain of want of modesty and humility in other men, they are constantly presenting us with examples of the most insufferable arrogance and presumption in themselves. In the midst of all their liberality of sentiment, they would seek to tread down, and trample in the mire, all their opponents, while they exclaimed, "We are the men, and wisdom will die with us!"

The literary pretensions of these gentlemen will not be disputed; for fine writers by trade give us no more than we are entitled to expect, when they excel those who have had no opportunity for making such acquirements. But no superiority of erudition can justify the sacrifice of truth, justice, common sense, and common decency, to the evil propensity of vilifying, instead of confuting an opponent. It is to be more than suspected that the dull and clumsy raving of Mr. John Styles has stung as keenly as if his language had received a higher polish; but the fanatics will not be terrified by their menaces more than by a madman's stare. The conscious inability of carrying into execution their plans of theological uniformity, has seemingly, for some time, turned the attention of these celebrated philosophers to engage, if possible, the secular arm to forward their intolerant views. But modern governments are wiser than to attempt to bring the minds of all men to one opinion; which, indeed, the Reviewers themselves ought to have known would be a task not less difficult than to reduce the stature of all men to the same standard. I remember, some years ago, in reading the life of Roger Bacon, to have been much struck

with the idea, that he had dropped into the world three or four centuries before society was prepared to receive so great a genius. And it seems to me, Sir, to be the misfortune of the Edinburgh Reviewers, that they have come as much too late for the full developement of all their energies; for now the secular arm is not found to be so obsequious to the views of every bigot who calls for vengeance on all who dare to think, speak, and write, otherwise than himself. O the golden days of good Queen Mary!—

> "When Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
> Enjoy'd the show, and danc'd about the stake."

When poor ignorant fanatics, raving enthusiasts, and canting hypocrites, were punished for their sins here in this world, for the edification of all "rational Christians"—punished by something more substantial than pen and ink; when they were indeed "hunted, caught, killed, and cracked," as such vermin ought to be! Nor have later times been wanting in examples that might well alarm modern sectaries, could they take warning from declarations of so conscientious a devotion to the great work of regeneration. Not many years have elapsed since some hundreds of ministers of the Catholic church were consigned, as we are informed, to the pitiless deep—actually put on board vessels which were ordered to be sunk at the distance of a few leagues from land! For the enlightened politicians of France, found too, that to allow a *veto* might have been troublesome; and they also were bound to employ such instruments as were "most efficacious to the destruction of their victims."

I shall conclude these observations which I have ventured to make on the extraordinary opinions and doctrines of the Edinburgh Reviewers, by observing, that they have endeavoured to represent the Dissenters as dangerous enemies to Church and State at home and abroad—as objects of the public scorn and hatred, without adducing a single fact in proof of such atrocious insinuations. Thus they have failed in justice to that Public to whom they profess to devote their time and their talents. They have barbarously sought to revive that long-quieted spirit of persecution among their brethren, in the heart of their own country, by accusing a large portion of the community of the worst crimes, while they artfully evade to substantiate such charges; and, to serve their purpose,

magnify a few foibles, which no sensible man among the number would think of vindicating. And while they have forfeited the claim which they otherwise might have to the respect of their countrymen, by artifices the most mean, and inconsistencies which outrage all the principles for which they have on other occasions contended with so much ability and effect, they have given us a presage of the nature of that liberty which we are to expect, should the country unfortunately be cursed with *their* rule.

I have only to add further, that I am neither a Methodist, nor the son of a Methodist; and that I should, probably, never have heard of the work of Mr. John Styles, had I not perused the Edinburgh Review. But I am, Sir, and, whatever the evil genius which presides over the theological department of that work may be destined to accomplish, I trust I shall always be allowed to glory in being

A BRITISH PROTESTANT.

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